IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows. This listing of the claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1-11. (Canceled)

12. (Currently Amended) A linear drive device comprising:

an excitation winding producing a variable magnetic field and including an associated magnetic-flux-carrying yoke body having pole surfaces; and

an armature body including a magnet carrier having at least two permanent magnet parts and an axial oscillation movement being transferable to the at least two permanent magnet parts by the variable magnetic field of the excitation winding, the magnet carrier including an electrically conductive exterior frame and electrically insulating material mounted inside the exterior frame and holding the two permanent magnet parts on the exterior frame, wherein during axial oscillation movements of armature body, the exterior frame remains substantially outside ~~at least partially extending into~~ the magnetic field area defined by the pole surfaces of the yoke body and the excitation winding~~, the electrically insulating material and its disposition to partially extend into the magnetic field area defined by the pole surfaces of the yoke body and the excitation winding operating~~ to thereby substantially avoid an induction of eddy currents adjacent the pole surfaces of the yoke body.

13. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 12, wherein the magnet carrier consists entirely of an insulating material.

14. (Currently Amended) The device according to claim 12, wherein the magnet carrier includes a metal material forming the exterior frame, and wherein the parts of the magnet carrier which extend into the magnetic field area of the yoke body and the excitation winding exclude the exterior frame ~~are constructed of an insulating material~~.

15. (Currently Amended) The device according to claim 12, wherein each magnet part with respect to the associated yoke body and the excitation winding is covered by a ~~magnetic~~ magnet cover made of a ferromagnetic layer, a spacing joint axially spacing apart the magnet ~~magnetic~~ covers.

16. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 15, wherein the ferromagnetic magnet covers are spaced apart from one another by a distance a > 2 s, where s is the distance of the magnet covers from the respective pole surface of the associated yoke body.

17. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 15, wherein each magnet cover covers a larger area than the respectively associated magnet part.

18. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 15, wherein the magnet covers include an Fe-Si alloy.

19. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 15, wherein the magnet covers each have a thickness between 0.2 mm and 1.5 mm.

20. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 19, wherein the magnet covers each have a thickness between 0.35 and 1 mm.

21. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 12, wherein the magnet parts are embodied as plate- or sheet-shaped.

22. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 12, further comprising a plane of symmetry and the device being constructed symmetrically with respect to the plane of symmetry.

23. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 12, wherein the armature body is rigidly connected to a pump plunger of a compressor.

24. (Currently Amended) A linear drive device comprising:

an excitation winding producing a variable magnetic field having a longitudinal extent along a longitudinal axis, the excitation winding including an associated magnetic-flux-carrying yoke body having a pair of pole surfaces axially spaced from one another relative to the longitudinal axis; and

an armature body including a magnet carrier having a plurality of permanent magnet parts, an electrically conductive exterior frame, and a pair of electrically insulating portions that hold the permanent magnet parts in a central portion of the exterior frame, the armature body being movable in an axial oscillation movement under the control of ~~that is transferable to the at least two permanent magnet parts by~~ the variable magnetic field of the excitation winding, the pair of electrically insulating portions being axially spaced from one another relative to the longitudinal

axis and at least one of the plurality of permanent magnet parts being ~~is~~ disposed axially intermediate the pair of electrically insulating portions, and wherein during the axial oscillation movement each one of the pair of electrically insulating portions is disposed to at least partially extend into a respective magnetic field area defined by a respective one of the pair of pole surfaces of the yoke body and the excitation winding while the exterior frame remains outside the magnetic field area.

25. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 24, wherein the magnet carrier consists entirely of an insulating material.

26. (Currently Amended) The device according to claim 24, wherein the exterior frame of the magnet carrier includes a metal material and wherein the parts of the magnet carrier which extend into the magnetic field area of the yoke body and the excitation winding comprise the plurality of permanent magnet parts and the pair of electrically insulating portions ~~are constructed of an insulating material~~.

27. (Currently Amended) The device according to claim 24, wherein each magnet part ~~with respect to the associated yoke body and the excitation winding~~ is covered by a ~~magnetic~~ magnet cover made of a ferromagnetic layer, a spacing joint axially spacing apart side edges of adjacent magnet ~~the magnetic~~ covers.

28. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 27, wherein the ferromagnetic magnet covers are spaced apart from one another by a distance a > 2 s, where s is the distance of the magnet covers from the respective pole surface of the associated yoke body.

29. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 27, wherein the magnet covers include an Fe-Si alloy.

30. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 27, wherein the magnet covers each have a thickness between 0.2 mm and 1.5 mm or a thickness between 0.35 and 1 mm.

31. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 24, wherein the armature body is rigidly connected to a pump plunger of a compressor.

32. (New) The device according to claim 12, wherein side edges of the magnet parts abut one another.

33. (New) The device according to claim 32, further comprising a plurality of magnet covers made of a ferromagnetic layer, wherein each magnet cover is mounted on a surface of a magnet part such that the magnet cover is positioned between the magnet part and an adjacent yoke body, and wherein the side edges of adjacent magnet covers are spaced apart from one another.

34. (New) The device of claim 12, wherein the yoke body comprises an E-shaped frame with the excitation winding mounted around a center leg of the E-shaped frame.

35. (New) The device of claim 12, wherein the excitation winding comprises a first excitation winding mounted on a first yoke body and a second excitation winding mounted on a second yoke body, wherein pole surfaces of the first and second yoke bodies face each other across an air gap, and

wherein the armature body is positioned in the air gap between the first and second yoke bodies.

36. (New) The device of claim 35, wherein the device is symmetrical about a plane of symmetry passing through a center of the air gap.

37. (New) The device according to claim 27, wherein side edges of adjacent permanent magnet parts abut one another.

38. (New) The device of claim 24, wherein the yoke body comprises an E-shaped frame with the excitation winding mounted around a center leg of the E-shaped frame.

39. (New) The device of claim 24, wherein the excitation winding comprises a first excitation winding mounted on a first yoke body and a second excitation winding mounted on a second yoke body, wherein pole surfaces of the first and second yoke bodies face each other across an air gap, and wherein the armature body is positioned in the air gap between the first and second yoke bodies.

40. (New) The device of claim 39, wherein the device is symmetrical about a plane of symmetry passing through a center of the air gap.